The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 20, 1912, at the P. O. Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

AGITATE! EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

VOL. 14, NO. 51. WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 1925. WHOLE NO. 726.

COMPANY 'UNION' IS AUTOCRACY'S LATEST TRICK

The company "union" is called "employes' representation" by friends of this system.

It is based on the ancient theory that in his longings for freedom man can be tricked by bombast and high-flown rhetoric. "Employes' representation" can not withstand analysis any more than the long list of other autocratic deceptions and deceits.

As each pretense fails to meet man's necessities, the autocrat creates another one.

From the divine right of kings to the open (?) shop, the American plan and employes' representation, the history of autocracy has been a record of delusion.

The autocrat's success can be traced to man's refusal to discard sentiment for reason.

Men remain in bondage just as long as they refuse to think.

The autocrat rules when men are swayed by emotion; when they fail to analyze slogans.

In its essence, there is nothing new in the company "union."

Outwardly, it appears original, but fundamentally it is the old, old trick of confusing those who are to be held in subjection.

When an employer can discharge at will, the worker is not free. The worker may be permitted to discuss certain grievances, but he dare only go so far. If he steps beyond bounds that the employer has set, he loses his job.

This is the company "union." It was first established by the Rockefeller Colorado fuel and iron company 10 years ago. Since then many other anti-union corporations have adopted the scheme.

The system is praised by every autocrat for the very manifest reason that all autocrats have a common interest.

It is praised by the lackeys of autocracy for the same reason.

To even suggest that this system will eventually result in democracy in industry is to play with words. Workers can not be free when they fear loss of their job.

If men are to be free, they must not be intimidated. They must be permitted to present grievances in their own way.

Where the employer suggests the plan, and then discharges or demotes those who disagree with him, it is as truly autocratic as any czar or king, without the frankness of these ancient tyrants.

The trade union is the one movement that can stand any test the liberty-lover would apply.

The industrial autocrat is aware of this. That's why he opposes trade unionism and attempts to invent a substitute.

Autocracy's history is an endeavor to satisfy man's craving for liberty and the larger life without giving him that liberty.

The company "union" is the latest phase of these historic failures.

TRADE UNION BAN UPHELD BY COURT

Washington, March 7.—The United States supreme court has ruled that railroad managements may refuse to recognize any representative of employes they see fit.

Under the transportation act employes may select their representatives to conduct negotiations with the rail managements. The court's decision means that where the employes select a trade union representative, the managements need not recognize them.

The decision is an indorsement of the anti-union policy of the Pennsylvania railroad that has refused to recognize trade union representatives. The shop men and railroad clerks asked lower federal courts for an order compelling the road to comply with the law, but both the district court and the court of appeals refused the request. The supreme court now upholds these decisions.

While these cases were pending the Pennsylvania telegraphers voted by a decisive vote of more than 12 to 1 in favor of the Order of Railway Telegraphers as their representative. The railroad management took its usual position in this case, and organized a company "union."

The Pennsylvania management has been the leader of railroads that ignore the transportation act—when it attempts to interfere with their anti-union policy.

Postal Workers Win Wage Increase; Rout Bureaucracy In Long Contest

Washington, March 7.—President Coolidge has signed the postal workers' wage bill, which raises wages $300 a year, dating back to January 1. This was the hardest fight for wage increases that was ever inaugurated by government employes, and is a defeat for the bureaucracy of the postoffice department, which opposed the measure.

At the first session of this congress the increase was approved by an almost unanimous vote, but was rejected by the president on the ground that there were many applicants for vacancies, that present rates are comparable to similar work in private employment, and that the bill did not provide for raising the necessary revenue.

The veto was upheld in the senate by the narrow margin of one vote. Every pressure was applied to senators, and the two-thirds vote was secured by the president, although the bill passed the senate with but three dissenting votes.

In the new bill, just signed by the president, congress lowered rates for newspapers, instead of raising rates, as urged by the postoffice department. The latter's attack on second-class matter causes an annual deficit of $74,000,000. The newspapers championed the first wage bill, and the postal workers claim that the postoffice department would drive this support from them by placing an extraordinary cost on publishers. The $74,000,000 deficit was also hotly denied by friends of the bill in both branches of congress.

Bankers are asked to join the question of a living wage with deficits of the department, many of which can be traced to the bureaucracy.

"The duty at hand, without any distortion of issues whatever," said Congressman Clyde Kelly, who introduced both bills in the house, "is to pass this bill which grants a living wage to postal workers. Let us do our duty."

At the eleventh hour the chamber of commerce of the United States announced that a referendum of its affiliates showed overwhelming opposition to the bill, but this, too, failed to affect congress.

The bill increases the cost of parcel post service. This, and other charges, will undoubtedly result in the claim that the postal workers are responsible for the additional tax.

The postal workers protested against the new principle that the department's social and economic value be ignored and that a living wage should be based on the amount of revenue received.

These workers repeatedly pointed out that they perform many functions, other than handling mail, for which they receive no credit. During the war, when the government desired a census of hogs throughout the nation, the postoffice department quickly secured this information that would cost millions of dollars if attempted by any other branch of the government.

The department sold practically all of the war savings stamps and 75 per cent of the Liberty bonds. These instances are cited by the postal workers to show the impossibility of placing the department on a dollars-and-cents basis. It is an impossible task to find a satisfactory basis for this position, they say, as it would be if the government attempted to put its department of commerce or department of agriculture on a profit-and-loss basis.

The unions of postal workers affiliated to the A. F. of L. directed the successful wage fight. Three or four company "unions" that were potted by department officialdom took no part in this movement for a living wage.

COURTS ARE IGNORED BY STRONG COMBINES

Washington, March 7.—Big business appears to have a total disregard for law and courts, according to statements by Senator Norris in discussing a resolution regarding the latest probe of oil companies. The senator quoted the attorney general of the United States as his authority.

"This attorney-general only comes from the attorney general's letter that these oil companies do not pay any attention to a decree of court," Senator Norris said.

"It is the same with the General electric company. Guilty of violating an injunction of the court dissolving them; they go right on with the business just the same. Then the attorney general commences another suit in equity and spends a lot of money, and eventually may prove or not, as the facts may develop, whether they violated the injunction. If they violated it, there will be another decree of court, and they will say, 'Gentleman, now be good.' There is no penalty, nothing but the injunction. Then they will go on and violate it just the same again, and another suit in equity will come, and if they find them guilty, another injunction will be issued, and the court will say, 'Do not violate it any more,' and the next morning they will commence violating it again.

"I have thought sometimes that trusts and monopolies would be willing to pay something to the government to have them bring actions to dissolve them. They generally do better afterwards than they did before."

MANY MARRIED WOMEN IN OHIO INDUSTRIES

Washington, March 7.—A study of women in Ohio industries, made by the United States women's bureau, disproves the theory that women marry and abandon their industrial jobs.

Of the 16,222 adult women in Ohio industries who gave information, 4,694 were married and 17.2 per cent were widowed, separated or divorced, making a total of 45.6 per cent who were or had been married. In this conjugal group were reported more than one-half of the women in each of the following industries: Laundries, the manufacture of auto tops, women's suits and coats, food products, pottery, rubber products, cordage, other textile, and tobacco and cigars. Single women predominated strikingly in 5- and 10-cent stores and in the manufacture of electric products, aprons, overalls, and men's suits and coats, since in each of these industries single women formed more than two-thirds of the women workers.

PROFIT BY UNIONISM

Portland, Ore., March 7.—The bulletin issued by the company "union" in the lumber industry announces that "there are company unions" in several logging camps. The eight-hour day is also in operation in these camps, the bulletin says.

Here is another instance where the unorganized are profiting by trade union agitation. Organized labor established the eight-hour day and drove the company store out of many industries, but these gains are ignored by unorganized who are lured into company "unions" by employers who deny them the right to bargain collectively.

EMPLOYERS GIVE BOND

Boston, March 7.—As a pledge that they will observe a contract with locals of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union, the Dress Contractors' association agreed to deposit a bond of $1,000 and an additional $50 for each new member that may join the association. Violation of the agreement resulted in a strike of these workers.

"WHITE AUSTRALIA" DEBARS ALL JAPANESE

New York, March 7.—Reference to a "white Australia," in a speech in this city by Dr. Earle Page, treasurer of the commonwealth of Australia, recalled that this section of the British empire debars Japanese without protest by the Japanese nation.

Dr. Page pointed out that the population in Australia is barely two persons to the square mile, the standard of selective immigration that has been upheld," he said. "The result is that 98 per cent of the population is either British born or of British extraction. It is the aim of every party in Australia to maintain a standard of living as high as we possibly can, and to make our economic conditions so that the general mass of people will live under the best conditions possible. This ideal is behind the policy 'white Australia,' which is held not merely as a policy, but as a tradition by every one in Australia and every party in Australia."

GAINS FOR OLD AGE PENSION

Indianapolis, March 7.—While the house rejected an old age pension bill, trade unionists believe they have made progress in this fight. The proposal was accepted by the senate, and law makers in both branches gave wide publicity to the question.

PENSIONS PAID MOTHERS

Toronto, Ontario, March 7.—During the month of January the mothers' allowance commission of this province expended $147,796 for the benefit of mothers and dependent children. The beneficiaries included 2,335 widows and 487 wives of incapacitated husbands.

STRIKES AND TRADE

It is a curious thing that the trader who lives by a working man's wages, knows best of all the working man grows with every easement of labor's hours and payment. Always on that side of the big companies whose aim and wish is to curtail the spending powers of the workman and to limit the cry of his need to the bare necessities of life. Give a man more to spend, and he will widen his spending. He can not stand up and spend on air; he spends with some one who lives by selling or by making; consequently, business profits by every extension of wages and of leisure.—Australian Worker.

COKE WORKERS UNITE; GET FIRST CONTRACT

Indianapolis, March 7.—President Lewis of the United Mine Workers announces that the first wage agreement ever negotiated in the coke industry has been signed with the Consolidation coal company of West Virginia.

This is significant when the opposition of West Virginia anti-union coal owners is recalled.

"These employers have resorted to every brutality in their fight against the miners' union. They have employed machine guns, strike guards, injunction judges, and packed juries in an effort to drive workers from the union. Women and children are housed in barracks and tents erected on land leased by the union because they were evicted from company houses.

The new coke agreement is in immediate effect. It covers wages for all classes of coke workers in the northern panhandle field and is the beginning of the organizing campaign that has been started by the miners.

Unions Don't Oppose Apprentices; Bosses Ignore Future Craftsmen

New York, March 7.—Answering the time-worn claim by a local newspaper that trade unions oppose apprentices, Francis Mahoney, trade analyst and director of research for New York building congress, replies that no building contractor in this city comes anywhere near using the number of apprentices the various building trades unions allow.

Mr. Mahoney's statement is in line with a recent declaration by the United States bureau of labor statistics that the number of apprentices employed in the building trades unions in Washington, D. C., show that "in not a single case where the number of apprentices allowed by union rules could be calculated was the allowed number being trained."

"At the present time there are at least 500 carpenter apprentices out of work in New York city," Mr. Mahoney said. "Out of 5,614 carpenters (registered) there are only 1,496 apprentices employed by the various employers." This, too, in spite of the fact that the union is allowing one apprentice to every two or more men.

"During the peak demand for woodworkers, there were an average of 150 of these apprentices out of employment all the time.

"The bricklayers, with an estimated membership of 8,500, and absolute control of employment conditions, have approximately 1,400 apprentices, and of these an average of more than 300 are constantly out of employment. During the peak demand at least 200 of these young apprentices were out of work. This, in spite of the fact that employers may apprentice two to a firm and have three on every job.

"Nearly two-thirds of the firms employing apprentices are indentured with their fathers, the employers refusing to accept the responsibility of these young workers.

"The plasterers, who have come in for a great deal of condemnation, with 5,000 union members, show only 620 indentured apprentices, whereas the union allows one to every five men. At the present time there are at least 200 out of the 620 indentured apprentices out of work, and, in fact, all of these boys have, on the average, lost fully one-quarter time during the so-called boom years.

"The painters and decorators, with 10,000 members in district council No. 9, have but 180 apprentices. It is taking the continued effort of one employe in the office of the apprenticeship commission to keep even this small number 90 per cent employed.

"The cement masons, with 600 members and an allowance of 50 apprentices, seem never to have succeeded in keeping more than 38 steadily employed.

"The conditions in electrical work as regards apprenticeship are so bad that we are finding a great majority of the journeymen leaving that trade and going back to errand boy, stock clerk and other such jobs.

"These are facts that are taken from the files of an active and statistically permanent organization. These are only a few facts that concern some of the important trades."

BRAVE LAW MAKERS THANKED BY LABOR

Seattle, March 7.—In a letter to members of the Washington legislature who supported the federal child labor amendment, President Short of the state federation thanked the lawmakers for their courage in resisting the vicious propaganda of opponents.

"Rarely has any issue been so cruelly and criminally misrepresented as this great humanitarian proposal," President Short said. "Though temporarily defeated, the right and justice f child labor regulation will inevitably prevail through the mists and the good fight for it will go on indefinitely until success has been attained.

"In the face of the tremendous misrepresentative propaganda, your courageous vote is all the more praiseworthy, and our appreciation of it is the greater."

ANOTHER CO-OP. BABY BORN

Springfield, Mass., March 7.—At a meeting in this city co-operatives along the Atlantic coast organized the Eastern states co-operative league, a federation of co-operatives in New England, New York and New Jersey.

In these states there are upward of 100 co-operative societies carrying on almost every conceivable line of business. The total membership of all societies represented at the meeting in this city totals 9,000 persons, and the annual sales aggregate $2,000,000. The capital stock of these societies is $400,000.

Subjects assigned committees for future consideration include: Establishment of uniform accounting methods and auditing for co-ops., promotion of uniform co-op. labels and brands on products sold by co-operatives, co-op. training school, regular conferences of managers, promotion of adequate co-op. legislation in the eastern states.

BAR WOMEN AS JURORS

Pierre, S. D., March 7.—The state legislature has refused to pass a bill qualifying women as jurors in municipal courts.

ARCHIE CRAWFORD DEAD

Washington, March 7.—Report from Europe record the death of Archie Crawford, for many years secretary of the South African federation of labor. He was expelled from South Africa 11 years ago for his activities in connection with the building trades unions in Washington, D. C., show that "in not a single case where the number of apprentices allowed by union rules could be calculated was the allowed number being trained."

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LABOR A COMMODITY WITH STEEL TRUST

The United States steel corporation has never made public the standards used in determining whether wages should be increased or decreased.

Are living costs, with additions for the experience and skill of certain groups of workers, used as guiding principles in determining wage rates?

From observation it would seem that the corporation merely follows the so-called law of "supply and demand." It pays rates which in a market of free competition will attract men to work on its properties. When labor is scarce it has increased wages and in periods of depression it has decreased them.—Russell Sage Foundation, department of industrial studies.

RENT BILL IS DEAD

Washington, March 7.—The bill that would regulate rents in the District of Columbia died with the recent congress. The measure would place rigid curbs on the hands of a commission. President Coolidge favored the proposal which was intended to check gouging landlords. Real estate men throughout the nation flooded the capital with protests against this unusual legislation. The landlords now promise to be "good."

RETAIL FOOD COSTS UP

Washington, March 7.—Retail food costs increased 20 of the 51 cities included in the latest compilation by the United States bureau of labor statistics.

From December 15, 1924, to January 15, 1925, Cincinnati, Kansas City and Savannah lead with increases of 4 per cent. Butte, Little Rock, Louisville, Omaha and Peoria were next with 3 per cent. Manchester and Providence reported decreases of less than five-tenths of 1 per cent.

For the year period, January 15, 1924, to January 15, 1925, the largest gains, 8 per cent, were reported by Louisville and Norfolk. Baltimore, Little Rock and Savannah followed with 6 per cent.

WANT PRIVATE POLICE

Indianapolis, March 7.—Trade unionists declare that if the state legislature passes all the police bills now before it, the state will be no prize citizen. The senate has authorized the governor to grant police powers to any person requested by the railroad officials. Full police power is being granted other persons and the state bankers' association is urging its favorite cossack legislation.

MILL WORKERS TALK UNIONISM

Seattle, March 7.—Following the organizing of oil workers in Everett, Wash., state, mill workers throughout Washington are talking unionism. The Everett movement surprised those who claimed, "It can't be done." Several hundred workers are now enrolled in the new union, chartered by the A. F. of L.

RENEW AGREEMENT

Quebec, Ontario, Canada, March 7.—The local Typographical union has voted to extend its wage agreement with employing printers.

VICIOUS LABOR SYSTEM FORCED ON PRISONERS

Chattanooga, Tenn., March 7.—The evils of the convict-contract system were explained by David Hanly, legislative representative of Tennessee state federation of labor, at a meeting of trade unionists in this city.

Under the system which still is in force in this state, the contractor pays the state an agreed price for work done by convicts by the convicts. The state furnishes the building, light, heat, power and drayage, feeds, clothes the prisoners and maintains guards and other employes. The contractor supplies the raw material. The prison officials are supposed to set the task, and convicts are whipped with a big strap for failure to perform this task.

"The piece-price system is practically only a disguise for the contract system," Mr. Hanly said. "It has usually been adopted as a 'reform' from the contract system. Theoretically, it leaves the prison management in the hands of the warden, but the opportunity for graft is so great that theoretical advantages have not been developed. It is considered even more oppressive than contract labor because it has more serious competitor with free labor."

PROBE CONVICT LABOR

Charleston, W. Va., March 7.—Publicity by organized labor has resulted in a legislative probe of the convict labor system in the state penitentiary.

The West Virginia Federationist suggests that the lawmakers also investigate the state board of control, which "is leasing the state's unleased convict labor at the Moundsville penitentiary to the convict labor trust for 70 cents per day while the rate paid to other states ranges from $1 to $1.35 per day."

Taxpayers are hopful, the labor paper says, that the law makers will make a real investigation and uncover the rottenness that exists at the state penal institution and not follow the whitewash path of its predecessors.

BROOM MAKERS ORGANIZE

Oklahoma City, March 7.—Broom makers in the city organized and signed an agreement with the Crites broom company.

WORKERS SPEEDED UP; LOW WAGES CONTINUE

New York, March 7.—Improved machinery, intensified speed and a demand for profits on watered stock and on stock dividends that range from 100 to 600 per cent, as well as the causes of the present deplorable condition of the textile industry, declared Thomas F. McMahon, president of the United Textile Workers.

Prior to the automatic machine, a weaver operated eight looms, which the average was six. The speed of these looms was about 120 picks per minute and the average pay was $8 per week. The speed has been increased and the machines a weaver now operates are 24, and in many cases more.

"The wage of the weaver has not kept pace with the advance of production, and yet, in spite of these facts, unfair employers are increasing the number of machines," President McMahon said.

"The employers demand dividends upon capital stock that is watered by stock dividends ranging from 100 to 500 per cent a couple of years ago, as well as upon capital stock watered 100 and 200 per cent through the process of reorganization. The workers know this as well as the general public, but they forget it in the humdrum of their daily tasks."

President McMahon reminds unorganized workers who have heretofore depended upon the United Textile Workers to raise wages to provide for them, that this policy is at an end. "They must become members of this organization if they desire to be benefited," said. "This is not a decision of the officers, but a mandate given at our last convention.

INSURANCE FOR OIL WORKERS

Fort Worth, Texas, March 7.—Officers of the Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers announce that the new form of group insurance, approved by the last convention, will become effective April 1.

This insurance will be compulsory and cost each member $4.50 per year for $500. Because the international officers act as general agent for the insurance company, about 80 per cent of the cost for insurance in this hazardous industry is eliminated.

DOLLAR'S PURCHASING POWER IS TEST

By PROF. IRVING FISHER
Department of Political Economy, Yale University

To the person that can not understand that money changes, and that a thousand dollars today is apt to be very different from a thousand dollars tday or next year, the postman's argument that he is poorer now than he was in 1913 seems unreasonable.

"He got $1,200 in 1913," they say, "and has since been raised 50 per cent, getting $1,800 today. Surely he ought to be satisfied."

But money has changed in purchasing power so that $1,800 today is worth only 1,044 "pre-war dollars."

If this is true then the postman really hasn't $600 a year more than he had in 1913, except on paper. On the contrary, in actual purchasing power he has $166 less. The dollar of today and the dollar of 1913 are very different in purchasing power, although the same in weight of gold. The $600 raise in terms of gold, or of money representing gold, is not a real raise. He can not eat gold, nor clothe and shelter himself with it. He must convert his gold—or his money—into food, clothing, and shelter. The question then becomes: Will his $1,800 today buy him more of these things now than his $1,200 bought him in 1913?

Electrical Power Will Affect Nation; Public Urged To Meet This Change

Washington, March 7.—The use of giant electrical power, which is now being developed, will bring as great a revolution in industry, agriculture, and housework as did steam power, according to the department of social action, National Catholic welfare conference.

In its weekly bulletin these churchmen declare that the public should share in the control of electrical power in industry and in the transmission of electricity. In generation and transmission of electrical power should share in the control of the wages and salaries they get, in the conditions of their work, in the methods that are to be followed, and in the rewards of their efficiency."

A warning is raised against applying the old individualism that was rampant during the industrial revolution caused by steam power.

"If the rule of the steam revolution is followed, if electricity is to be owned and controlled on the principle that a relatively few individuals must necessarily be the owners of electrical power, and that somehow it will be best for everyone if these owners are allowed to make money, or nearly as much, as they can, then the body of the people as consumers, the employes in industry, the farmers, small business men and our whole political, intellectual and social life will be the worse off," it is stated.